

Palmetto PARTISAN

The Official Journal of the South Carolina Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans



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The True Spirit of Christmas

By Steve Douglas, *Guardian Chairman*

In the early 1900s the old soldiers' home in Atlanta, Georgia was filled with broken and impoverished men who had fought so bravely for the Confederacy. They were now just thankful to have a roof over their heads and hot meals to eat. These soldiers had been relegated to spend their last days in this institution penniless. It would be nearly twenty years before the Confederate Pension system would be established. These old soldiers, tired and feeble with only their memories and the company of their old comrades, owed their Christmas cheer to one man - "10 Cent Bill."

Bill did not believe it enough for these old sons of Dixie to receive on Christmas just an extra sweet roll or maybe a piece of hard rock candy or what ever some Confederate widow had baked and donated to the home. Because the old soldiers' home was supported only by a small amount of state funds and relied mostly on public charity to operate, usually there was nothing left in the budget for special occasions such as Christmas.

Each year before Christmas, Bill would set out soliciting donations for these tired old men who defended the South when they were needed. Then on Christmas Eve, Bill would distribute what he had collected and would always see that each man had a few dollars which was indeed a blessing to the old soldiers. One year, Georgia's Governor Hugh Dorsey helped Bill pass out the goodies. The smile on their faces and the sparkle back in their eyes, even if only for a moment, was the only reward "10 Cent Bill" said he ever wanted.

Who was Bill?...Bill Yopp was born on one of the largest cotton plantations in Laurens County, Georgia, owned by Jeremiah Yopp. Bill was the personal servant to Thomas Yopp and followed his childhood friend and master into battle when the war broke out. Yes, Bill was one of the 70,000-plus black Southerners who fought for the Confederacy. He was a member of Company H of the 14th Georgia Infantry Regiment and served as a drummer. He got his odd name (10 Cent Bill) during the war by



William "Ten Cent Bill" Yopp,
Drummer and Body Servant

cleaning and shinning the shoes of his fellow soldiers for 10 cents, which, by the way, made him the richest soldier in the unit. They were kind to him during the war and Bill was kind to them when they needed help. This is a great example of Southern camaraderie

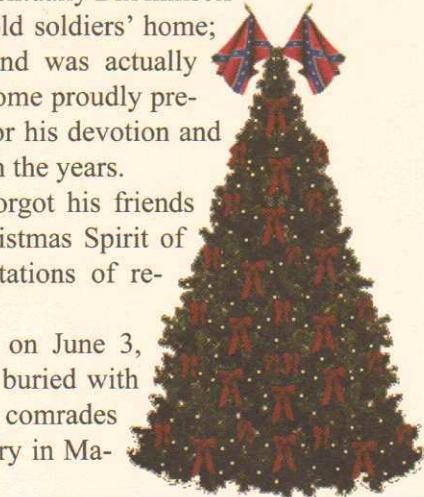
and the true spirit of the Christmas Season.

The photo at right was taken of Bill and Captain Thomas Yopp at the soldiers' home just shortly before his lifelong friend and former master died in 1920. Although now in his eighties, Bill was honored to give the funeral address, at the family's request, for his old friend and fellow Confederate soldier.

As the years went by, eventually Bill himself became a resident of the old soldiers' home; the first black admitted and was actually voted in. The men in the home proudly presented Bill with a medal for his devotion and his acts of kindness through the years.

"10 Cent Bill" never forgot his friends and he truly lived the Christmas Spirit of giving without any expectations of reward or personal gains.

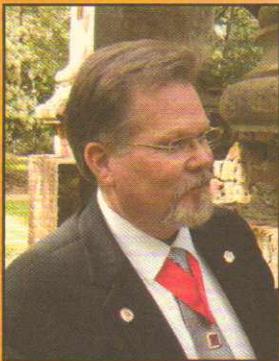
Private Bill Yopp died on June 3, 1936, and is appropriately buried with his old friends and former comrades in the Confederate Cemetery in Marietta, Georgia.



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Merry Christmas to All...



We, in the SCV, are often criticized and misunderstood for our love and study of history. While working and planning for tomorrow we are still able to look back and reflect upon the past, its struggles, its victories and the life lessons it provides as we follow the path that brings us to the present. History is bound in many volumes and the stories teach valuable lessons of instruction for those who take the time and initiative to embrace them.

Consider the Greatest Story of all time: "*The Christmas Story*". God, taking upon Himself the form of man in order that we (*mankind*) might receive the most precious gift in life...the salvation of God.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (Hebrews 2:9)

During this Christmas season, in the year of our Lord Two Thousand and Twelve, I pray that your homes and hearts find health, prosperity and happiness. But above all, I hope you find and experience the Peace and Joy of knowing the gift that God sent to us more than two thousand years ago; His Son Jesus, the Christ child. Remember, Jesus is the Reason for the Season.

**Mark A. Simpson, Commander
South Carolina Division
Sons of Confederate Veterans**



The Official Journal of the South Carolina Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans

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A Christmas Story From the Diary of Catherine White Roland

By Robert Slimp

This piece is from the diary of Catherine White Roland. Mrs. Roland was the young daughter of Amos and Elizabeth McKinney of Waynesboro, Georgia. During the war, Catherine's husband, Charles Alden Rowland, was an officer in the Confederate Army of Tennessee and the owner of Ivanhoe Plantation on the outskirts of Waynesboro. They had one son who was born in 1861. In her husband's absence, Mrs. Roland ran the plantation with the help of her mother.

In late November of 1864, General Sherman's Calvary Commander, General Hugh Judson Kirkpatrick rode up to the Ivanhoe Plantation House and immediately entered to look over the fine china and silver. Shortly thereafter several of his men came in to warn him that General "Fighting Joe" Wheeler had just entered the property and would be at the house in less than five minutes.

Mrs. Roland wrote in her diary what followed: "Immediately Kirkpatrick and his Yankees left, and jumped on their horses and skedaddled, saving our house and indeed any of our property from being rifled."

On Wednesday, November 30, 1864, Mrs. Roland wrote that General Sherman had decided to go through central Georgia to try and capture Savannah. General Kilpatrick had been unable to make any headway toward Augusta, and had been ordered by Sherman to re-join him. She went on to say, "Hearing that General Joe Wheeler, had returned, after defeating Kilpatrick and was now once again on our property, I sent for him at once and invited him, and any of his staff he wished to bring to dine with us. He accepted the invitation and spent several hours with us. He told us that Kilpatrick had joined the infantry at Louisville, and has now advanced upon three roads leading to Augusta, and thinks they have made that move to protect their infantry. General Wheeler said that he thinks he will go towards Savannah because Sherman has already made that decision, as he can there operate with his fleet, should he be successful, he will thus be able to accomplish more than by going to Augusta. I personally hope we will be able to keep him from Savannah though I doubt very much if we can hold the place as we have a small force in comparison to Sherman's immense army." Mrs. Roland then added, "I like General Wheeler very much indeed, he is very pleasant and perfectly unassuming. John Reynolds was with General Wheeler piloting him through the country so he also came to dinner; he says his Father has suffered very heavily, that the Yankees burnt up everything but their dwelling and killed all of their live stock and completely rifled the house. Gano came down from Augusta to join Wheeler. We had a note from General Wheeler the next day saying he thought we might rest quietly as we were not likely to be disturbed by the Yankees." Thankfully there were no more Yankee threats!

On Christmas Day, 1864, Mrs. Roland describes her conflicting feelings of hope and despair on what, in happier times, had been one of the most joyous days of the year: "The greeting of 'Merry Christmas' seems like a mockery now. While there is so much trouble and suffering in our midst and I have not had the heart to give utterance to it today. What a striking contrast between the last Christmas. My darling husband was with me then and we were very happy together, and now there are many hundred miles between us, and many anxious hours do I spend in being separated

See Story, on page 3

THE FIELD PULPIT

Ken Temples

SC Division Chaplain

From 1852-1854, Colonel Lee's position as Superintendent of the Military Academy at West Point required him to be present during the holidays, leaving the family at Arlington without him. In 1856, Lee was again absent from the Arlington Christmas celebrations when he was transferred to Texas with the 2nd US Cavalry. It was there that he sent the following lines to his wife and family:



"The time is approaching when I trust many of you will be assembled around the family hearth at dear Arlington, to celebrate another Christmas. Though absent, my heart will be in the midst of you, and I shall enjoy in imagination and memory, all that is going on. May nothing occur to mar or cloud the family fireside, and may each be able to look back with pride and pleasure at their deeds of the past year and with confidence and hope to that in prospect. I can do nothing but hope and pray for you."

Again, only a few days before Christmas, he wrote:

"I have been recalling dearest Mary the many happy Christmases we have had together, and the pleasure I have enjoyed with you, your parents and the children around me. I ought not therefore to repine at an occasional separation from you, but be grateful for what I have had, and be prepared to keep this solitary and alone. My prayers and thoughts will be with you and all will receive my fervent salutations. I hope nothing will be omitted that I could have done, to make each one happy."

Dear brothers, if I could wish for you a Merry Christmas, it could be no more than what our great Chieftain wished for his own loved ones in 1856. It is in that same sweet spirit that I send your way my dearest thoughts and prayers for a very happy Christmas!

In the name of our precious Savior, Jesus Christ,

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Ken Temples

South Carolina Division Chaplain



Story, cont. from page 2

from him, which is increased each day as I fail to hear from him, but I trust in God and pray that he will watch over and protect him from all dangers, disease and accident and yet bring us together again. God has been most merciful unto us and my heart is full of gratitude and thankfulness for all the blessings He has given me, and above all do I thank him for having spared the life of my precious husband and child. Last Christmas a large party was assembled at dear old Ivanhoe and we had a happy time together and I remember so well how much pleasure the children had in receiving their presents from the Christmas tree; three of that party have since passed away, Charlie McCay, and dear little Lizzie and Clara. They are spending a happy Christmas in Heaven for they are all bright angels in that peaceful and happy home."

Yet despite the stark contrast between this Christmas and those previous, there were pointed moments of joy. "I have had pleasure today," she writes, "in witnessing the happiness of my little darling. As soon as he opened his eyes this morning he called for his stocking and was perfectly wild with delight when he opened it and saw all the gifts from 'Santa Claus,' and exclaimed, 'oh, Mamma, isn't Santa Taus a dood old man.'"

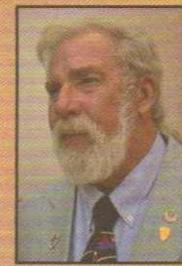
MUSTER

Ken Thrasher

SC Division Lt. Commander

Greetings Compatriots,

The Fall Season is upon us, and winter is on its heels. Time has flown by since the Reunion in North Myrtle Beach and many things have been accomplished during this time. The Potential Members spreadsheet is available for all Camps to see and utilize. The names and contact information on persons that have downloaded applications are listed for camps to follow up on and try to get these men into a camp. Scott James, of Columbia, has been appointed as the Division 2nd Lt. Commander. Compatriot James' duties are to help and assist me and the Camps with administering the Potential Member and Delinquent Members Spreadsheets, as we try to recover members



that have dropped by the wayside over the years. I am asking that each camp use their Lt Commander as their retention officer or find a member that will take up the task. With a little work, we can recover these men that have dropped out of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

With the hot days of summer



past, the cooler weather offers a chance for our camps to get out in their communities and participate in festivals, cemetery cleanups, Cross of Honor Dedication, etc. These are just some of the ways and avenues to acquire recognition in your home communities, plus it helps in recruiting. Remember, we, the Sons of Confederate Veterans, are the best kept secret in the State. Let us all work together in our home communities to see that we become the best known organization in our community. The Sons cannot grow without people of the communities knowing who we are, what we do and what we stand for, so let's get more acquainted with our home communities.

In Closing, I would like to wish everyone a very safe and happy Christmas and New Years holiday. Let us not forget the true meaning of Christmas. It is not only a time to spend with family and friends, but the time to remember the birth of Jesus and to reflect upon our religious beliefs.

Keeping the Flag unfurled

Ken Thrasher

Lt. Commander, SC Division

A Fireside Christmas Story

Writer Wilkie Collins was extremely popular throughout the Confederate States, and many a soldier read his fireside Christmas story, "The Stolen Mask, or The Mysterious Cash-Box", published in 1864. It demonstrates the educational and intellectual level existing at that time, from the Gentlemen-class down to the barefooted common soldier. Despite desperate shortages of ink, paper, and printing presses as the War went on, the South wrote, read, stimulated the Muses and dreamt the dream of human souls.

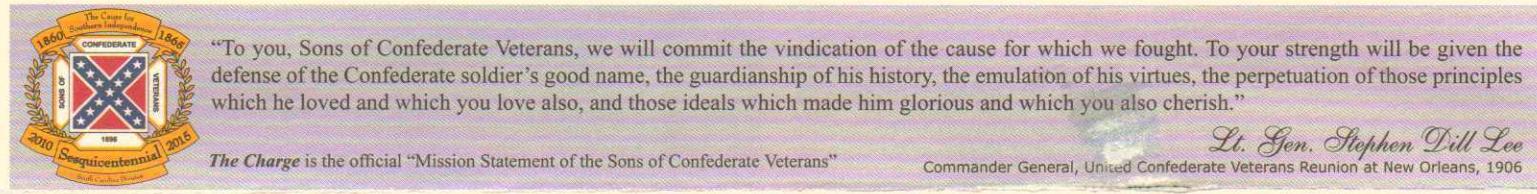
During the last winter of the War, Wilkie Collins' "The Stolen Mask, or The Mysterious Cash-Box. A Story for a Christmas Fireside" was published in Columbia, SC. The story is a revised version of Collins *The Mask and the Mystery: A Christmas Sketch*. Wilkie Collins, a great friend of Charles Dickens, is best remembered for his novel *The Moonstone*, which featured one of the first detectives in English fiction, long before Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes*. If you want a taste of what your ancestors were reading, check this out.

"The Stolen Mask" follows retired actor Ruben Wray, his granddaughter Annie, and his friend Martin Blount. Wray is fanatical in his devotion to the study and performance of Shakespeare, and when the story opens, he and his companions have just finished a brief stay in Stratford-Upon-Avon, England. Wray has secretly made a mold of Shakespeare's bust in the church there, and then created a perfect replica. Ruben Wray soon discovers that someone saw him making the copy and that the authorities seek to punish him. In his haste to leave town, however, he forgets the mold hidden in one of his previous lodgings and the troubles begin...

Wilkie Collins, "The Stolen Mask; or The Mysterious Cash-box. A Story for a Christmas Fireside", Steam Power-press of F.G. DeFontaine, Columbia, S.C. 1864

It's available as Kindle edition e-book, but you can read the novel online for free by using the following link:

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/collins/collins.html>



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